

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----181007Z 120219 /12

O 180930Z APR 77
FM USMISSION USBERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4392
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T USBERLIN 1017

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, WB, UR, FR, US, UK
SUBJECT: SOVIET DEMAND THAT ALLIES STOP FLAG TOURS IN WEST BERLIN

REF: (A) STATE 86258, (B) BONN 6582

1. WE ARE SORRY TO LEARN THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE NOW
ELEVATED TO A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE THEIR DEMAND THAT THE
ALLIES STOP SENDING FLAG TOURS TO EAST BERLIN, BUT IT WAS
PERHAPS AN INEVITABLE EVOLUTION GIVEN THEIR PERSISTENCE
IN RAISING THE SUBJECT DURING THE LAST THREE MONTHS IN
THE BERLIN AMBASSADORIAL CHANNELS.

2. THE TWO CIRCLES OF FORMAL SOVIET AND WESTERN VIEWS
ON THE STATUS OF GREATER BERLIN HAVE A VERY LIMITED
OVERLAP OR COMMONALITY, WHICH INDEED IS ALMOST RE-
STRICTED TO OUR USE OF THE BERLIN CONTROL ZONE
AIR SPACE, AND EVEN THAT UNDER PREMISES WHICH VARY
BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES. THE SOVIET ASSERTION THAT THERE

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ARE NO QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENTS ON THE DESPATCH OF
FLAG TOURS REFLECTS THIS UNDERLYING DISAGREEMENT, BUT
FROM OUR STANDPOINT IS IRRELEVANT SINCE THE TOURS ARE
ONLY PART OF A MANIFESTATION OF CONTINUING ALLIED
PRESENCE IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE CITY, WHICH IN OUR
CONCEPT IS A UNIFIED AREA. IF THE SOVIETS SUCCEED IN
BLOCKING THE FLAG TOURS, THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO MOVE

FURTHER AGAINST THE REMAINING ELEMENTS OF OUR ACCESS
TO EAST BERLIN.

3. THE THREE MISSIONS HAD ALREADY ARRANGED A CONFERENCE
FOR MAONDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 18, TO DISCUSS THE THREAT ON
THE BASIS OF THE SOVIET PRESENTATION TO THE FRENCH. OUR
IMMEDIATE GOALS WILL BE TO DEFINE THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF
PRESSURE POINTS BY WHICH WE COULD RESPOND TO ANY SOVIET
(A) HARASSMENT OR (B) STOPPAGE OF THE FLAG TOURS, AND TO
COME TO SOME UNDERSTANDING ON CONTINUED CONDUCT OF THE
TOURS. MEANTIME, WE ARE CONTINUING OUR NORMAL NUMBERS
OF 3 TO 4 PATROLS PER DAY, WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO USE
MORE THAN USUAL DISRETION.

4. OUR OVERALL JOB AS WE SEE IT HAS THREE PARTS:

(A) A PROMPT, SHORT AND FIRM REJECTION OF THE DEMAND.
PROMPTNESS AND FIRMNESS ARE THE CRITICAL INGREDIENTS,
SINCE IT IS OF THUTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT WE TABLE
WITHIN DAYS A REJECTION OF THE REQUIREMENT BEFORE
THE OTHER SIDE BEGINS TO ENFORCE IT. ONCE THEY BEGIN
ENFORCEMENT MEASURES, OUR WRITTEN RESPONSE WILL BE BOTH
LESS EFFECTIVE AND MORE DIFFICULT, SINCE IT WILL HAVE
TO BE TAILORED TO PRACTICAL MOVES OF REACTIONS.
(B) WE MUST DECIDE AMONG THE ALLIES AS TO HOW TO
CONTINUE THE TOURS IN TERMS OF ACTIVITIES AND NUMBERS.
(C) WE MUST QUICKLY IDENTIFY LEVERAGE IN WEST BERLIN
OR ELSEWHERE AGAINST HARASSMENT OR PREVENTION OF THE
TOURS.

5. OBVIOUSLY EMBASSY BERLIN SHOULD INFORM THE GDR

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FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT NEITHER SIDE IS COMPETENT TO DISCUSS
THE EPISODE OF APRIL 14 (REPORTED IN BERLIN 5767). FULL
REPORT ON MATTER FOLLOWS IN SEPTTEL.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT DEPARTMENT
AUTHORIZE THAT WE AND BONN IMMEDIATELY INFORM ALLIES OF
FACT OF WASHINGTON DEMARCHE. AMBASSADOR STOESEL ENDORSED
THIS PROPOSAL WHILE HE WAS IN BERLIN UESTERDAY. SERIOUS
ALLIED CONTINGENCY PLANNING OR DRAFTING IN SUCH CASES
IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT SIMULTANEOUS EXCHANGE OF RELEVANT
INFORMATION. GEORGE

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